

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T BONN 00059

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, PFOR, NATO, BE, US
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE EUCOM MOVE TO BELGIUM

REFS: A. STATE 314130; B. BRUSSELS 12689

1. SHOULD THE U.S. AND BELGIUM DECIDE IN FAVOR OF
EUCOM COLOCATION WITH NATO AND SHAPE, EMBASSY BONN
BELIEVES THAT THE FRG COULD BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT THE
MOVE ALTHOUGH HARDLY TO WELCOME IT. WE FORESEE A
NUMBER OF DIFFICULTIES THAT WILL REQUIRE MOST JUDICIOUS
HANDLING.

2. THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE FRG ARE THE TRUE
NATO CONSERVATIVES. THE ALLIANCE HAS SUCCESSFULLY KEPT
THE SOVIET UNION OUT OF WESTERN EUROPE FOR MORE THAN A
QUARTER OF A CENTURY, AND THE GERMANS AUTOMATICALLY VIEW
ANY ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE MILITARY STATUS QUO WITH
MISGIVINGS. THEY WOULD REGARD A POSSIBLE EUCOM MOVE TO
BELGIUM IN THIS LIGHT. SINCE NO COMBAT UNITS WOULD BE
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DISPLACED, EVENTUAL FRG AGREEMENT SHOULD BE ATTAINABLE,
BUT ONLY BY A CAREFUL EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE GERMANS
THAT NOTHING FUNDAMENTAL HAS CHANGED AND THAT THE MOVE
CARRIES COMPENSATING ADVANTAGES FOR NATO AS A WHOLE.

3. STUTTGART WOULD CLEARLY REGRET THE LOSS OF A
PRESTIGIOUS MAJOR AMERICAN HEADQUARTERS AND THE JOBS AND

OTHER ECONOMIC BENEFITS WHICH ACCRUE FROM EUCOM'S PRESENCE IN THAT CITY. MINISTER-PRESIDENT FILBINGER AND MAYOR ROMMEL WOULD CERTAINLY PROTEST VIGOROUSLY. THE TO-BE-EXPECTED ADVERSE LOCAL REACTION COULD BE EASED BY A PROGRAM WHEREBY THE RELINQUISHED FACILITIES IN STUTTGART WERE UTILIZED BY OTHER U.S. OR WEST GERMAN MILITARY UNITS.

4. OUR MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM HERE IN THE FRG WOULD BE THE NEED TO COUNTER THE INEVITABLE CHARGE THAT THE AMERICAN ACTION CONFIRMS LATENT SUSPICIONS OF U.S. INTENT TO USE WEST GERMAN TERRITORY AS A BATTLEGROUND IN CASE OF WAR WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE FACT THAT WE SENT TWO NEW COMBAT BRIGADES TO THE FRG WHILE WITHDRAWING A MAJOR HEADQUARTERS TO ANOTHER COUNTRY WOULD RAISE THE OLD SPECTRE THAT THE U.S. VIEWS THE FRG MORE AS AN AREA FOR STRATEGICAL/TACTICAL MANEUVER AND EXCHANGE OF FIRE THAN AS AN AREA TO BE PROTECTED FROM ATTACK. RECENT SPECULATION THAT THE SOVIETS COULD REACH THE RHINE WITHIN 48 HOURS WOULD CERTAINLY INTENSIFY THESE FEARS, AND CAST OUR MOVE IN THE WRONG LIGHT. FRG ASSISTANCE IN A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM DESIGNED TO STILL SUCH FEARS WOULD BE REQUIRED, AND COULD PROBABLY NOT FULLY ALLAY THEM. THIS EMPHASIZES THE NEED FOR HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE A FINAL DECISION IS TAKEN, SO THAT THE FRG CAN TELL ITS PEOPLE THAT IT HAD FULLY SHARED IN THE DECISION, AND SO THAT THE GERMAN PUBLIC AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT DO NOT LEARN OF ANY PLANS

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FROM LEAKS.
STOESSEL

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